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## Music fest in the U.S.

THE LAST weekend in May was undoubtedly unique in the history of New Jersey, U.S. - it saw its largest turnout ever for a Carnatic music event .

Over 4,000 people showed up for the festivities, which included three days of concerts, speeches and lecture demonstrations.

Fans drove several hundred miles, and there were many that flew down from as far as Atlanta and California. The event was the Silver Jubilee of the Carnatic Music Association of North America.

The jubilee was the culmination of 25 years of hard work on the part of CMANA's many volunteers and board members.

The packed auditorium in Marlboro, New Jersey, where the event was held, was a testament to the progress CMANA has made.

Started in the basement of the home of the founding member, Dr. P. Rajagopalan in 1976, CMANA has grown into an organisation that is recognised not only in the U.S. but in the music circles in India as well.

Over the past two decades, it has worked to bring Carnatic music into the mainstream life of the Indian community, and also kindle an interest in this art form in children and youth.

The many accomplishments of CMANA were on display at this 25th Anniversary gala. They featured scintillating concerts by well- known artistes, many of whom first introduced to the U.S. by CMANA several years ago.

They included Kadri Gopalnath, Sudha Ragunathan, and P. Unnikrishnan all of whom performed at the festival this year.

Others who delighted the audience were T. V. Shankaranarayanan, N. Ramani, Kanyakumari in Vadhya Lahari, M. S. Sheela, T. N. Seshagopalan and Vedavalli, who presented a lecture-demonstration.

Junior members were active both on and off the stage. Each day began with an invocation by the Junior members, while other junior members formally introduced the artistes.

Many in Chennai will remember the Sangeetha Saagara Award function, where CMANA honoured the stalwarts of Carnatic music.

The credit for organising the festival goes to the combined efforts of the current executive led by its president, Mr. T. V. Krishna, an amateur morsing player.

- RRC

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